

464 villagers who hold too little land to support their families.¹⁸ Some
 village men peddle vegetables during the slack agricultural seasons or
 find some other seasonal work, but there is no real solution to the
 economic problem. Since Lukang offers few job opportunities for vil-
 lage people, the only alternative is for the village's labor surplus to
 move on to Taipei to find work. While the move to Taipei for most
 village men is merely a temporary migration to supplement family
 income, some establish themselves in the city and move their entire
 families there. Those who still have a small piece of land in the village
 area then usually rent it out, or ask someone else to cultivate it for
 them. The owner thus gains some economic security by retaining title
 to the land; very few people will sell their land outright.

DIET AND NUTRITION

433 The Hsin Hsing villager is far from self-sufficient, either for food
 261 or other needs. After the harvest the villager consumes his own vegeta-
 432 bles, rice, and sweet potatoes, but during the course of the year, he
 must buy a great part of his staple food. Vegetables, additional rice,
 [439] pork, fish, salt, tea, sugar, sesame seed oil, peanut oil, lard, and any
 [443] number of other items are purchased either in Lukang or from itiner-
 ant merchants. Additional necessary annual purchases like clothing,
 tools, and other necessities, almost none of which are produced by the
 villagers themselves, show how dependent the villager is on the outside
 world.

262 The diet of the Hsin Hsing villager, except perhaps for the most
 poverty-stricken, depends more on occasion than perhaps anything
 else. The foods eaten at daily mealtimes are usually quite simple and
 inexpensive, and thrift dominates these ordinary meals. However, on
 262 special religious or other festive occasions when it is necessary to feed
 574 guests, thrifty regard for the kinds and quantities of food served be-
 comes the least important factor. A villager invites criticism from his
 577 fellows if he is not thrifty in his everyday eating and living habits, but
 the man who exercises thrift on a festive occasion when outside guests
 are present usually earns the reputation of being "stingy."

241 An additional determinant of diet is the phase of the agricultural
 262 cycle. During the harvest season, for example, it is customary for every-
 one engaged in the heavy work to eat five meals a day. The meal at
 264 the end of the day's work is particularly elaborate and nutritious. A
 571 man may also earn himself the reputation of being stingy if, for exam-
 ple, he is frugal with respect to the food he serves his field laborers at
 harvesttime. Word of his stinginess spreads quickly, and such a farmer
 000 may find it difficult to obtain field labor at future harvesttimes. The

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182 We will also see that although some religious or magical act is performed in the village almost every day of the week, either by a family or by the village as a whole, this is not necessarily an indication of piety and veneration as the West understands religion. For the Taiwanese villager, the observances are not necessarily sacred only; many villagers have pointed out that they "make life interesting and exciting, and the people look forward to them with great enthusiasm." Not only do such activities have a significant function in Taiwanese society but, as we shall see, many villagers are extremely aware of the importance of many rituals to the continuity of their society and patterns of living.

771
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SUPERNATURAL
BELIEFS AND ACTIVITIES

[779] The villagers' practices are not based on a strong belief in any single concept of the supernatural. There is, in fact, so complete a mixture of religious and magical beliefs in the village that it is often difficult to determine where one form ends and another begins. While elements of popular Taoism and ancestor worship are the strongest and most apparent, there is a clearly Buddhist influence, and the moral and ethical teachings of Confucianism are extremely evident. There are also important elements of animism out of which has "grown a complex of attitudes and values" (Kulp, 1925:284) and a system of divination by which the "spirits of wind and water" (Kulp, 1925:284) may be controlled; this is referred to as geomancy (*feng-shui*).

[764]
[779] The funeral ceremony (described in Chapter 7) clearly shows the presence of this admixture in the villagers' beliefs. There are elements of Taoism and Buddhism in the ritual of the journey of the spirit of the dead to the underworld for final judgment, punishment, and rebirth in the next world, but there are also evident Confucian teachings and even remnants of animistic beliefs. It is perhaps most accurate to say that all these beliefs have been combined into a single loose system, and the average believer makes no attempt to define or distinguish the different elements of the whole.

Confucianism

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577 While Confucianism is closely integrated within the religious system, there is no formal cult or official Confucian ritual in Hsin Hsing village. Although there is a Confucian temple in Lukang, usually only residents of that city worship there.¹ However, the moral and ethical teachings of Confucianism are present in the rules of correct behavior which have been passed down from generation to generation of villagers. Filial piety, respect for age and authority, and worship of

RELIGION AND MAGIC

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the ancestors are all considered both important and fundamental to correct behavior. Aptly expressing a rather general feeling, one villager said, "Everyone knows it's natural to act this way. What other way is there to act?"

The development of this attitude is promoted chiefly by examples in everyday life which are a part of a child's general upbringing. Children are frequently told stories which emphasize the rewards of filial and virtuous behavior. The scrolls displayed and the stories told by the *tao shih* during funerals (see Chapter 7) contribute greatly to the indoctrination. In addition, the use of formal kinship terminology constantly reminds children of the importance of proper behavior towards their superiors or elders. Terms of respect (utilizing kinship terminology) which take into account the relative age and generation of all relatives and even friends and neighbors are learned early and indicate the way one person is expected to act toward another.

Children and adults are also constantly reminded of the "moral way" by door hangings whose elaborate calligraphy exhorts them to proper behavior as well as wishing them good fortune. While most villagers cannot actually read the characters, they know what they mean. These scrolls are usually purchased in Lukang; nowadays many of them bear anti-Communist, nationalistic slogans which mean little to most of the villagers who buy them.

The schools consistently emphasize many of the basic traditional moral values. Textbooks present stories about acts of filial piety or respect for elders and those in authority and emphasize the value of reasonableness, compromise, and cooperation, and, of course, patriotism and even extreme nationalism. In addition, special topics or themes are stressed during certain weeks. For example, the schools observe "filial piety week," during which they stress obedience and respect for age, teachers, and parents. Other weeks are devoted to the importance of love and charity, respect for country, and the national flag. Thus, we find the moral and ethical teachings of Confucianism constantly reaffirmed in everyday life.

Ancestor Worship

Ancestor worship, which is closely related to Confucianism and the mystique of filial piety, and whose rituals actually reinforce it, is a form of religious belief to which virtually all Hsin Hsing area villagers adhere. The believers are not, however, in agreement about the effect ancestors have on the lives of their descendants. Many in Hsin Hsing do not agree that ancestors provide positive aid to their descendants, but few would deny the misfortunes that are sure to fall if neglected ancestors vengefully fail to protect their unfilial descendants from the many negative spirits.

Since ancestral spirits live in the other world much as they did in

769 go in preparing special dishes for particular ancestors. When the family with whom we lived made their annual deathday offerings to the father of the head of the household they always included sweet rice cakes because the old man had been particularly fond of them.

769 Even those villagers who deny that the ancestors "really eat those
753 things" are somewhat less certain about what might happen if the offerings were discontinued completely. We found numerous examples of illnesses and other misfortunes which were attributed to the neglect of an ancestor. The various misfortunes of one village woman were attributed to her deceased father-in-law who was angry because she had failed to cook his favorite dish for the New Year's offerings; the illness of a child was ascribed to his father's deceased parents who were said to be angry because their son had made a matrilocal marriage; and the illness of another village child was interpreted as being the result of his grandfather's older brother's "coming to call him." This man had died without children of his own, and so the family was advised to give him their son in adoption as a means of placating him. If a family neglects their duties towards the ancestors, 769 the ancestors may plague them with illness and other misfortune, but 602 it is important to note that the ancestors do not represent a more 577 general morality. They are concerned only with their own good and the good of the family, not with general morality and the good of society. When we asked villagers if their ancestors would punish them for committing a crime, such as theft or murder, the typical response was, "Why should they do that? We are all members of the same family. We are

769 their sons and grandsons." Without exception, every instance of an
602 ancestor's "coming to ask for something," a euphemism for misfortunes
• 577 attributed to an ancestor, was explained to us in terms of the person's
having neglected some duty to his family, not to society at large.

769 In return for the support of their living descendants the ancestors
are expected to look after the general welfare of the family and to do
their best to fulfill the specific requests of the living. When his
ancestors fail in these duties, the average villager is angry and
indignant, just as the ancestors are angry when he fails in his duty
toward them. When his wife became ill a villager by the name of Lim
• Bi-kok appealed to his ancestors for help, and on their advice re-
moved and rebuilt his stove at considerable expense. Unfortunately,
his wife died. Worse yet, a few months later Lim Bi-kok's mother
became ill, and again he appealed to his ancestors and again with lack
of success. His mother also died. This flagrant failure on the part
of his ancestors made Lim Bi-kok so angry that he took the family
tablets down to the river, chopped them into little pieces, burned
the pieces and threw the ashes into the river, proclaiming himself a
Christian. Lim Bi-kok does not deny that there is some sense in
which his ancestors exist; he only feels that "there is no use in
[771] making sacrifices to such useless people." Since this episode, Lim
Bi-kok has become a relatively wealthy man, and his prosperity is often
cited by the village skeptics as evidence of the impotency of the
ancestors, but ancestor worship is not so frail a doctrine as to be
overthrown by one such example. Although it has now been fourteen or

*159 spots on her skirt—but the sweater she throws over her shoulders is
[29] often imported. Her voice is shrill or gives that impression because
[29] she is nearly always scolding or complaining about something, but one
can imagine that it was once a light feminine soprano.

*159 Tan A-hong had not had any permanent "friends" for some time
548 before Chai-ngo was born, and after her birth she found it more and
more difficult to make a living. Chun-ieng was sent out to work. She
was nineteen when I first met her and had been working as a prosti-
tute for four years. To me she seemed more like a sophisticated
American teenager than the timid giggling village girls her age. She
was considerably less curious about us than were her contemporaries
[24] in the village, but far less hesitant about satisfying her curiosity. The
village girls went into paroxysms of shyness if I asked them a ques-
tion, but Chun-ieng howled at my accent and then good-humoredly
tried to answer my questions. I rarely saw her interacting with anyone
her own age in the village, but she joins the games of small children
with an abandon and glee that would bring blushes of shame to the
cheeks of her stodgy peers. The childish pleasure she finds in cooking,
in feeding the family's dog, or in watching a newly hatched flock of
ducks is both unaffected and pathetic. When she is in the village,
Chun-ieng dresses soberly and wears little or no make-up, but she is
undeniably different from the other girls her age. Her upright bearing,
her poise in conversation, and even her smooth, pale skin are out of
place in the muddy lanes and the coarse brick farmhouses. She is tall,
[14] unlike her mother, but her bones have the same delicacy. Her face is
[14] long and thin, giving her high cheekbones the drama that her mother's
lack. Her eyes are a bit too small, but she shapes her eyebrows care-
[30] fully to minimize the defect. She doesn't cut her fine black hair, nor
allow it to be frizzed by cheap permanents. Often in the village she
pulls it back into a pony tail, giving her an innocent Alice-in-Wonder-
land look. She loves to gossip and has great skill in spinning a simple
anecdote into an intriguing story. Without slipping into vulgarity, she
can entertain the rather staid women of the Lim household with end-
less stories about her work—she can even keep Lim A-pou sitting for
awhile. There is always more laughter in the house when Chun-ieng is
home.

*159 Prostitutes in Peihotien occupy a rather ambiguous position,
548 resembling in no way the status forced on a prostitute, retired or
*593 active, in an American small town. They are considered "more inter-

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Tan A-hong: An Adopted Daughter

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esting" than other women of their age and income, but judgments about their morality or respectability are not based on their profession. Too many village girls have had to "go out to work" to support aging parents or young siblings. In recent years, there has only been one girl in the area who entered a brothel by choice, lured by the fine clothes and exciting life. More commonly, women become prostitutes because they were raised for that purpose, or because their family is desperately in need of the income. The villagers are not inclined to think of these girls as martyrs since Chinese children are expected to make great sacrifices for their parents, but they are not likely to criticize them either. On the contrary, most villagers assume a girl has amply repaid the debt she owes her parents for raising her when she obeys their command to become a prostitute—repaid it more fully than the daughter who remains at home can ever hope to. Parents can nearly always count on the support of village opinion in deciding the future of their daughter unless that daughter has supported the family for several years by prostitution. By giving up her youth, the young prostitute has gained a certain amount of control over her future. In the village her respectability depends upon how careful she is to walk within the paths of traditional morality when she is home for a few days each month, how compliant she is in turning over the majority of her earnings to her parents, and how cautious she is with village males. A prostitute who carries on professional activities within the village is in deep trouble. If her relatives are not aware of her indiscretion, they will be told, and that is usually enough. It is a small community.

No one in the Lim family tried to conceal from us Tan A-hong's former occupation or the source of Chun-ieng's present earnings. They are not callous about Chun-ieng's fate, but they also see her soft fingers resting next to their scarred, calloused hands, her delicate silk dresses hanging beside their coarse, shapeless working clothes, her closed bedroom door when they come in after three hours of early morning weeding in the fields. About her future they feel pity, but the life of a woman in a farm family is not easy either. In Chun-ieng's difficulties with her mother, however, she has the family's complete sympathy. They may chide her occasionally, or remind her of her mother's seniority, but their words lack conviction. Tan A-hong's outrageous behavior toward her daughter would challenge the beliefs of the most adamant proponent of filial piety. In all fairness, I must

*159 not an adopted daughter, she wouldn't be that way. She doesn't know
+596 whether you really need money or not. You have lost every dollar you
*593 got from selling your house now. Sure, that was your own money to do
578 with as you wished, but you think about that, too. She is getting older
and she is going to take care of you after she's married, but she won't
be able to give you so much money to gamble with. Married or not,
she won't be able to make this much money in a few more years. If
you had another NT\$10,000 to gamble with, you wouldn't be in this
mood today."

[577] As he left the room, Lim Chieng-cua added: "It is a rule that a
child must be good to his parents, but parents have to treat their
children decently, too. That is also a rule. You can do many things to
your children, but there is a point beyond which you cannot go. You
have already gone too far. You must stop pushing her. If she is dead,
your next daughter is too young to be of any use to you. What will
you do?"

Tan A-hong, crying quietly, went home.

+159 Late that evening, Lim Chieng-cua was summoned to Tapu to
762 receive a telephone call. One of the children was sent to tell A-hong.
She was a pitiful sight as she walked into the house. Her anger was
gone and her terror reduced her to listing absurd reasons as to why Chun-
ieng would not kill herself. When Lim Chieng-cua returned, he told
the assembled group that Chun-ieng had ~~been~~ found and was in good
health. He didn't even look at Tan A-hong and retired at once to his
bedroom.

Chun-ieng returned to Peihotien late the next day, and I'm afraid
the villagers were rather disappointed by her appearance. She should
have looked wan and dejected, but instead she looked happier than I
have ever seen her. She amiably satisfied the curiosity of her neigh-
bors, saving the details of her adventure for the family. Her skill in
story-telling did not suffer even when the story was at her own ex-
pense. After running out of the wine house, she bought some poison
and went to a hotel. She gave us a humorous description of the
delighted, if bewildered, pedi-cab driver to whom she gave the last of
her money. Just as she was about to take the pills, she heard someone
in the hotel being called to the telephone and decided she should
phone her lover in Tainan so that he wouldn't think she had killed
herself because of something he had done. The connection was, of
course, bad, so the boyfriend made her promise to wait until he could

121 complete, let alone exhaustive, as my selective criteria
182 were merely based on those items that seemed immediately
602 necessary for the analysis. A label under which they can
59 all be subsumed is not at my command, but they are similar to what have been labeled postulates (Hsu, 1969; Hoebel, 1960). The truth of these items would be generally accepted by most villagers. (The exceptions are illustrated later.) The items will hereafter be identified only by a number in parentheses.

[769]

- (1) It is necessary that a family obtain descendants to carry on worship of the ancestors. Worship of ancestors should be specific for approximately five generations above the oldest living member but may be general beyond that.

[769]
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- (2) Worship of an ancestor is best performed by a male with the same surname.

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- (3) Descent is patrilineal and surnames are obtained from a child's father.

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- (4) Males may assign their rights to give children their surnames to others.

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- (5) An adopted child is almost the equivalent of a natural child.

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- (6) The large extended family, ta chia ting, is best economically, morally, and ritually.

[577]

- (7) Relations should be harmonious within a household.

[578]

- (8) The larger the group the more likely there will be disharmony.

- (9) The individual is subordinate to the family of which he is a part.

- (10) Nevertheless, each person is an individual with his own personal qualities and idiosyncracies and rules for behavior must be flexible so he can meet them.

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462 real support for the many village men who are full time
464 farm laborers or who are partially farm laborers and
476 partially tenants or owner-operators.

Tea Processors

245 There are three tea processing households in
472 Sanlei. One processor owns much land which he operates
627 almost totally with hired labor and processes little
• [597] more than his own tea. Fifteen years ago he was caught
using false weights to buy tea leaves from Sanlei farmers
and villagers have never trusted him since. He and
his wife are isolated from the rest of the village in
social terms and both of their children are living and
[207] working in Taipei. The couple are reasonably well-off
financially by village standards and own the second
village television set which they watch alone without
guests. Just about everyone else in the village watches
the television set owned by the village store.

245 The other two processors pay identical prices
472 and offer identical services and share most of the
rest of the village tea production except that part
[477] sold to a processor in Erhlei. Although each processor
would like a larger share of the business, competition
is on the basis of establishing good relations with
sellers (farmers) rather than on service or price.
One processor is named Liao and had the major share of
business in the past. The other is named Chiu.

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but a majority were critical although all reinforced cultural values and standards.

A sample of the god's statements is listed below followed by my personal comments or explanations. As previously stated, in a normal situation, few of these statements would be permitted for seldom is there a face to face confrontation between an accuser and accusee unless the situation is going to degenerate into a serious fight.

(Names are all disguised for obvious reasons.)

[785] 1. "Liao A.B.: You are a sincere man. I have helped you to recover your health. I am happy that you always come to clean and take care of the temple." (Subject had prostate trouble with considerable discharge. After various types of medical and shamanistic treatment failed to bring relief, he made a pledge at the temple that if the gods helped he would worship daily forever. The pain is almost gone and he seldom has any more discharge. Each morning, at daybreak, he opens the temple, pai pai's with incense, and puts flowers in the vases. Every villager is aware of his pledge and performance.)

[590]
[364] 2. "Liao G.D.: You are a bad-hearted⁹ woman. You would not clean the dirty ditch in front of your house so the dirty water runs into the pond where other villagers wash clothes and vegetables." (Subject immediately ran off to clean her ditch. She frequently quarreled with her husband and his brother's wife.)

[753] 3. "Liao E.F.: Your second son has poor health. I will give him a charm. He should drink it in the early morning." (Subject is a community leader and head of an extended household. The charm is a package of herbs to be mixed with hot water. "To give" means that the speaking god will guide the proper stick out when the vase of medicine sticks is shaken.)

[784]
[753]
[755] 4. "Huang G.H.: Your wife is sick because she dried women's underpants in the kung ting in front of the gods. I will give you a charm for her to drink." (Subject is a local official and well liked.)

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5. "Liao I.J.: Old man, you are a good person and serve the gods. But your son is a bad-hearted person. He says bad things about people behind their backs." (The son is unfilial and wants to marry a village girl but her parents are refusing the match by asking a bride price of more than five times the standard amount.)

6. "Huang K.L.: Your sons' eyes hurt because you picked a bad day to fix your kitchen. You never worship the god's soldiers on the 1st and 15th of each month. You should worship on these days. I will give you charms for your family to drink." (Subject has a reputation for cheapness and refuses to spend proper amounts on ritual.)

[825]

[593]

7. "Yu M.N.: Your eldest son is not strong because the altar in your kung t'ing is not properly located. You should think about your second son's marriage because he is too embarrassed to talk to you about it." (The altar is one of the two in the village on the side rather than the back wall in relationship to the door. The man through whom the gods were now speaking was the "second son" mentioned in the statement.)

8. "Chiu O.P.: Your son is fine. Do not worry about him." (Subject is poor but considered to be a good man. His son is in the army and stationed in Kin Men.)

As can be seen from the above samples, the gods speak through the young men to reinforce common values. We talked to many people afterwards and none thought that the two boys through whom the gods spoke were bad-hearted people; that is, they believed that the statements really came from the gods. They said that in the past, bad-hearted people have tried to pretend they were gods but they always got caught.

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About 3:30 p.m., the shaman interpreted a character

written in the sand with the poles of a sedan chair as

562 his wife to serve tea. She quickly complied, brewing a
593 fresh pot and poured the tea into our cups, eyes downcast
and meek. She came back a couple of times to ask if her
"Lord and Master" desired more tea. Immediately after the
secretary left, while we were still sitting around the
table finishing a cigarette before returning to the court-
yard to finish the job, the "Lord and Master" was sent by
his wife to immediately fetch two buckets of water from
the river. For the outsider (the secretary), Liao Wei-yu
is the master of his house; among his intimates and neigh-
bors, everyone knows his wife is the boss.

121 Questions by an anthropologist will evoke all kinds
562 of statements about the superiority of men and their author-
ity over women. However, if material is carefully elicited
and logically analyzed, a different picture is likely to
emerge. For example, achieved status with a strong tendency
for it to focus on the family unit rather than on the indi-
vidual is extremely important in Sanlei as it is in most of
562 China. In any discussion about the manner by which a family
• 577 achieves prosperity or success, much of the material will
593 relate to the importance of women. It is believed that a
woman can make a man work hard and it is her thriftiness
which allows a family to accumulate money and achieve pros-
587 perity. A man will brag about his wife's ability to save
money and a woman's potentiality for thriftiness is an im-
portant attribute to be considered in selecting a bride.

562 The belief about the importance of a woman's ability to save
• 577 necessarily means she has some power or control over the
593 family budget and implies she also has the power to be ex-
travagant. Every story of financial success in the area
save one⁵ included a hard-working man and a hard-working
and thrifty woman in the cast of characters.

562 There was a corresponding belief that in bargaining,
437 a woman could always obtain the lower price which may have
been part of a self-fulfilling prophecy for everyone believed
it. Shopkeepers claimed that they asked the same high price
for certain items regardless of sex but they had two under-
lying basic acceptance prices, the lower one for women.
Men claimed women were better bargainers because they had
little fear of shaping themselves, i.e., they had little
"face" to protect.

562 This concept of prevention of shame contributed to
593 the difficulty of obtaining accurate data about money man-
agement. In spite of the emphasis on women's thriftiness,
men want to be known as the budget managers. However, on
several occasions while we were sitting around chatting in
an evening, a group of us decided to go down the road for
a glass of beer or wine. About half of the men had to go
home to get money from their wives first, even some of the
men who claimed complete financial control.

As previously explained, it is felt that a good wife
in Sanlei will be thrifty and will drive her husband to